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ABSTRACT

In 1989, a profile was developed of the full-time students attending New Brunswick community colleges (NBCCs), using demographic data, and educational and labor force background information found in student records. Data for the profile were retrieved from the NBCC's Student Information System for the academic years 1985-86 through 1988-89, focusing on the 31% of NBCC's students who were registered in programs lasting 20 weeks or longer. The study population comprised 100% of the students who were registered in Technology and Technical programs, 95% of those enrolled in Pre-Employment programs, 41% of those in Upgrading programs, and 6% of those in Special programs. The following trends in student characteristics were revealed: (1) since 1985-86, when the study population consisted of 40% females and 60% males, the proportion of females increased, reaching 46% in 1988-89; (2) the age structure of the student population over the four years was indicative of current trends toward a more mature student body in postsecondary institutions, with the average age increasing from 22 to 23 years; (3) 65% of the students were English-speaking and 34% French-speaking throughout the four-year period; (4) between 1985-86 and 1988-89, the percentage of students commuting over 100 kilometers to college decreased from 37% to 32%, while the percentage traveling between 20 and 100 kilometers increased from 25% to 30%; and (5) 64% of the 1988-89 students in the study population were academically successful, compared to 68% in 1987-88. (JMC)

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PROFILE OF NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by Hope Brewer

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Fredericton, New Brunswick

JC 900 073

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FOREWORD

Those in the business of delivering services have a strong interest in the people they are serving. What is their profile? What special needs would they have?

In recent years, there have been over forty thousand (40,000) enrolments per year for our courses, full time and part time. Ideally, a profile of each of the client groups would help program development and marketing in each of the major areas of concentration (full time pre-employment, apprenticeship, night school, contract training etc).

However, for this first profile effort, only limited information was available on students attending the traditional year long, full time courses. Since these are the students of the same courses that are surveyed in the annual Graduate Followup Study, this population was deemed a good starting point.

The students number between 4100 and 4700 depending upon the year (1986 - 1989) discussed. Thus, they represent between eight and ten per cent (8-10%) of the total enrolments in any one year. While the analyses are global, the results are compelling.

Pamela Easterbrook-Nadeau
Planning Services

INTRODUCTION - IN THE LARGER CONTEXT

Student Profile projects are usually undertaken to determine what characteristics are common among an institution's student population or to determine common characteristics of a specific group within the student population ie. mature students.

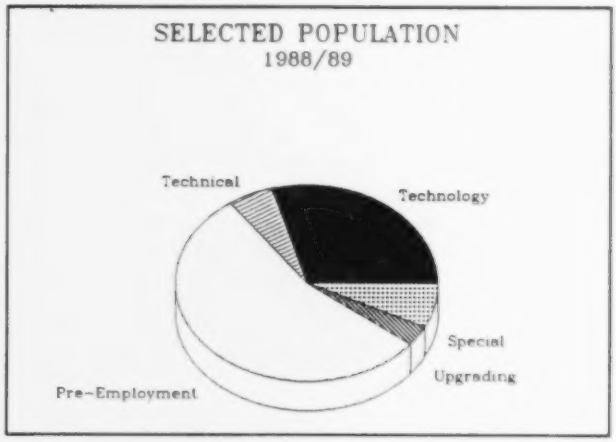
With respect to the national picture the Statistics Canada publication "A PROFILE OF POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS IN CANADA" is a survey of both full-time and part-time university and college students throughout the country. Regarding the full-time students, in addition to demographic data, the survey also looked at labour force activity in the twelve (12) months prior to enroling, and reasons for enroling. Generally, most students were working during the twelve (12) months prior to enroling. Also, most students gave job related reasons for enroling in their field of study.

At the provincial level, most provinces provide some background information in their Graduate Follow-up Surveys but do not produce a Student Profile. However, both Nova Scotia and Alberta hope to do so in the near future.

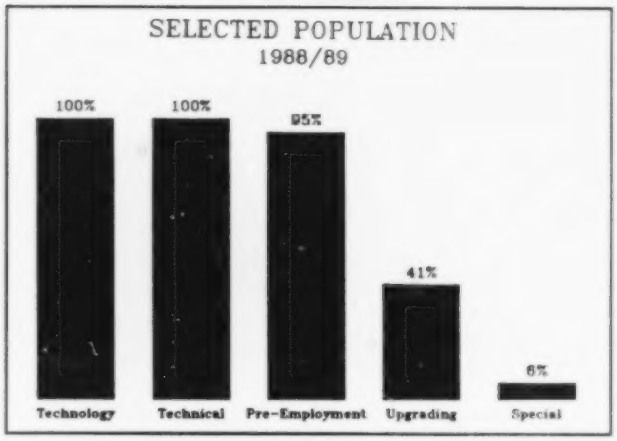
THE NEW BRUNSWICK SITUATION

The intent of this project was to develop a profile of all NBCC full-time students. Demographic data, educational and labour force background information which appear on the Student Record was to be analyzed. This analysis was to have compared the total population to specific groups of interest ie. long term full-time students compared to apprenticeship students. However, due to data retrieval difficulties, the population was limited to those full-time students enroled in the traditional year long programs. That is the same group that is surveyed for the Graduate Follow-Up Study. Likewise, there were strong limitations in the type of data available for discussion. This profile then presents a demographic sketch of this selected population.

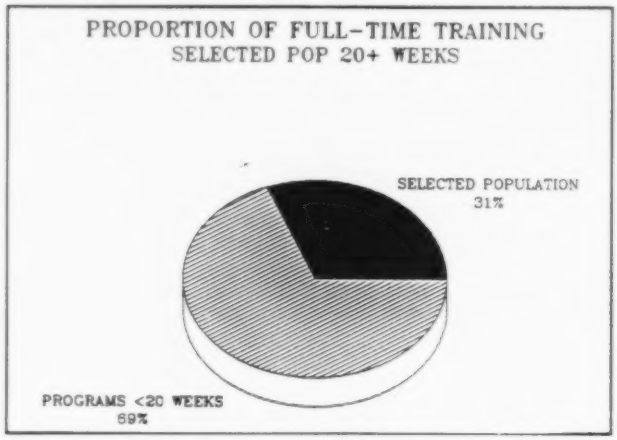
Information was retrieved from the Student Information System on the past four(4) years ie. 1985/86, 1986/87, 1987/88 and 1988/89. The student population for this project was limited to those who were registered in programs which were twenty weeks or more in duration. The composition of this selected population has remained basically the same over the four year period.



During this past year, the programs which were included in the selected population comprised one hundred percent (100%) of the students who were registered in the Technology and Technical categories. Ninety five percent (95%) of those enroled in the Pre-Employment category, forty one percent (41%) of those in the Upgrading category and six percent (6%) of those in the Special Category.



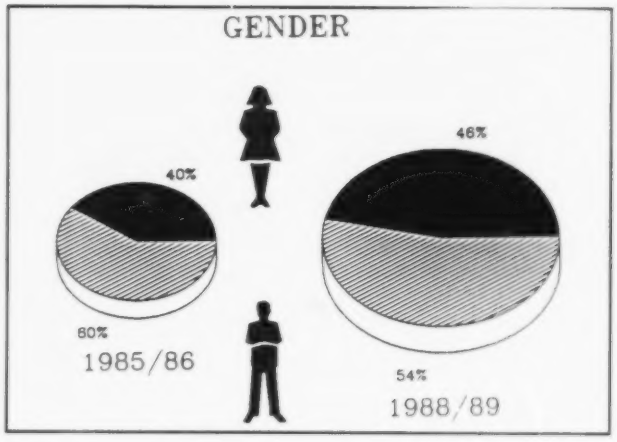
The majority (55%) of the students in the selected population were enroled in the Pre-Employment category. Twenty nine percent (29%) were enroled in the Technology category.



Most of the information attained was demographic: gender, mother tongue, age, marital status and distance to campus. Other information such as sponsor type and termination status was also retrieved.

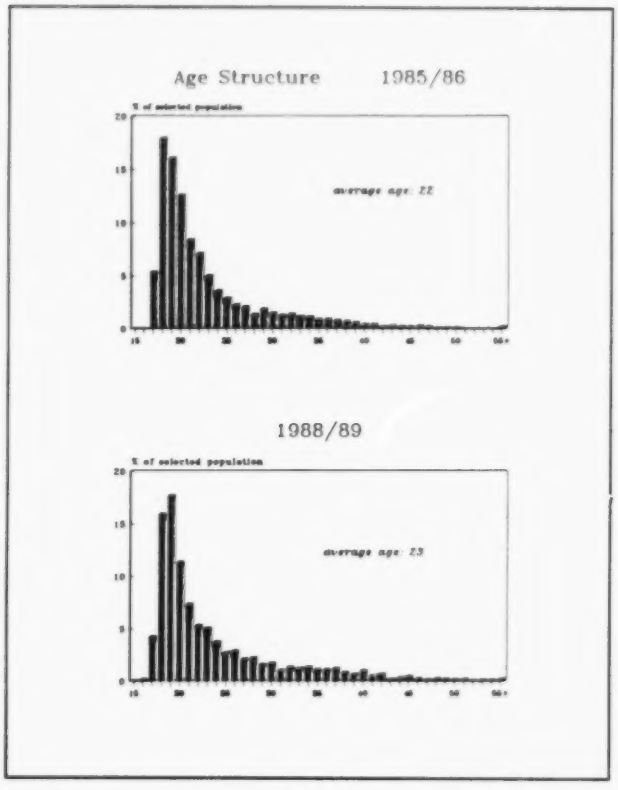
Gender

At the beginning of this four (4) year period the population was made up of forty percent (40%) females and sixty percent (60%) males. Each year since that the proportion of females has increased and reached forty six percent (46%) in 1988/89, approaching a fifty/fifty (50/50) split.



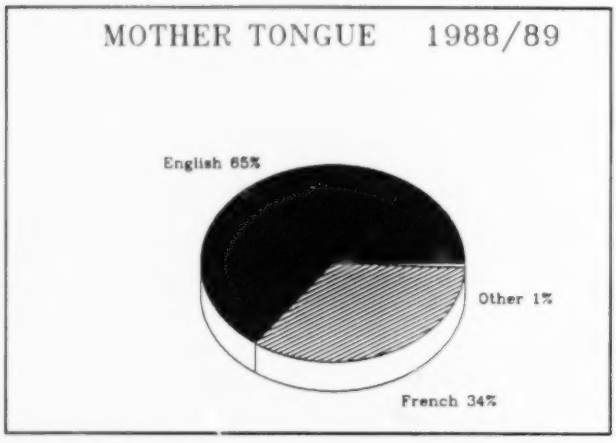
Age

The age structure of our student population over the four (4) year period is indicative of the current trends towards a more mature student population in post secondary institutions. The percentage of student in the non-traditional age groups is increasing. The average age has increased from twenty two (22) years in 1985/86 to twenty three (23) years in 1988/89.



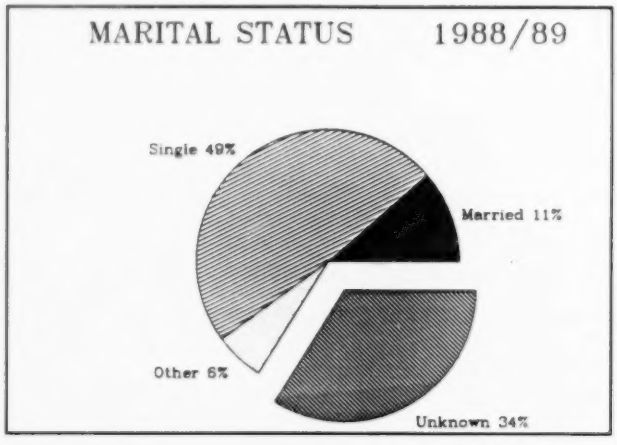
Mother Tongue

The percentage of English and French speaking student in the selected population did not change during this period. The percentage for the year 1988/89 are indicative of all four (4) years. The selected population consisted of sixty five percent (65%) English and thirty four percent (34%) French.



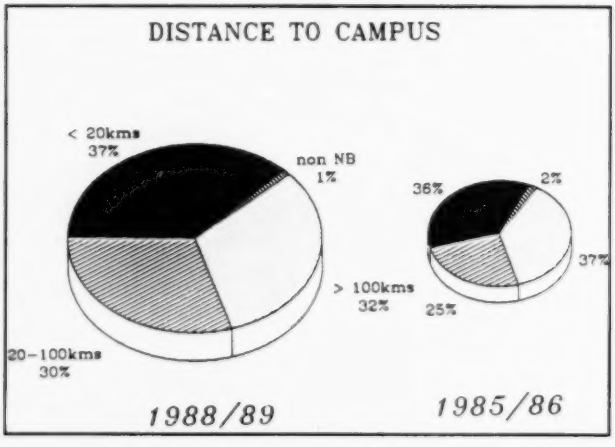
Marital Status

There is not enough information available on marital status of the selected population. The marital status of thirty four percent (34%) of this population, for the 1988/89 year, was not available from the Student Information System.



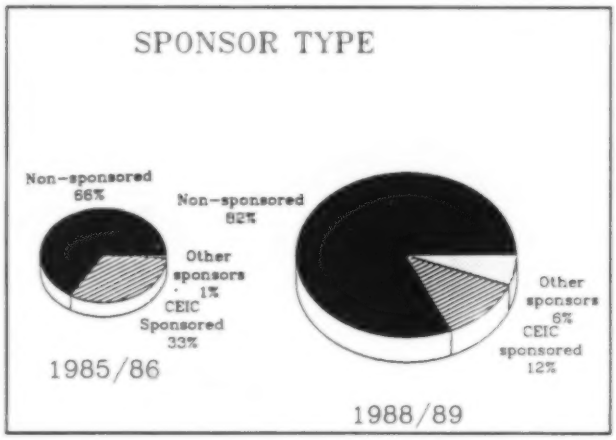
Distance to Campus

The percentage distribution of the distance that students are willing to travel to study at our campuses remained the same during the years 1985/86 and 1986/87. However, there was a substantial change between the year 1986/87 and the year 1987/88. There was a shift of five percent (5%) between those whose home address was twenty to one hundred (20 - 100) kilometres from the college at which they were enroled and those whose home address was more than one hundred (100) kilometres from the college at which they were enroled. This change can be interpreted as an immediate reaction to the college reorientation which was implemented for the year 1987/88. This change remained constant for the subsequent year. In 1987/88 and 1988/89 students were less willing to travel more than one hundred (100) kilometres but they were more willing to commute.



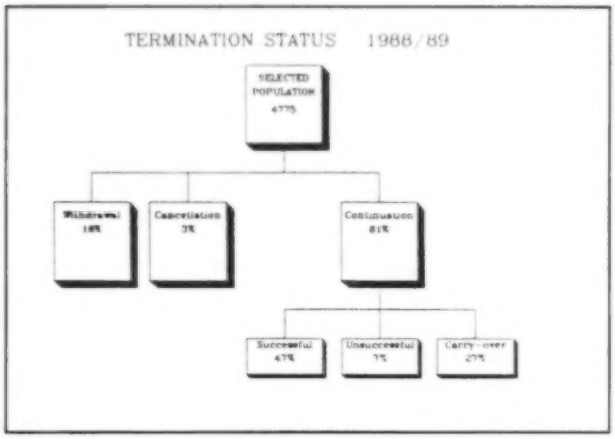
Sponsor Type

There was a significant difference in the percentage distribution of sponsor type over the four year period. Specifically, CEIC sponsorship decreased from thirty three percent (33%) in 1985/86 to twelve percent (12%) in 1988/89, for this selected population.

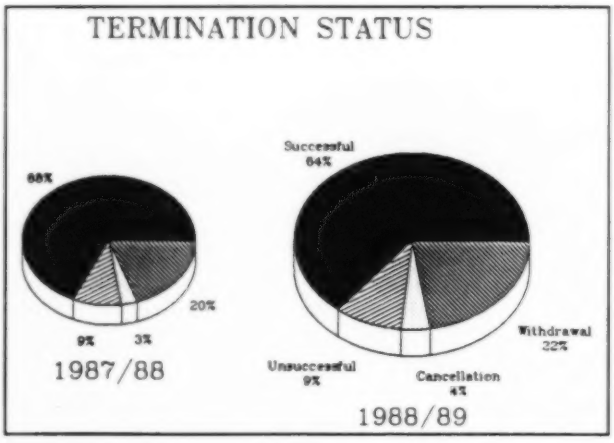


Termination Status

Data retrieved from the Student Information System can yield an overall picture of the status of all students on the thirtieth of June in any given year. Thus the status for the 30th of June, 1989 is shown in this organizational chart. Looking at this chart it is clear that many students (in fact twenty seven percent (27%)) are still continuing their studies. This is reflective of the fact that some students are continuing into the second year of a two year program others are enroled in continuous intake/exit programs.



If one was to subtract these numbers from the total number in the selected population then one would have a total number of students who have in fact terminated their studies by the end of June. In this way one could see how many succeeded, failed, cancelled or withdrew. In the year 1989 sixty four percent (64%) of all students in this selected population succeeded. This is down from the sixty eight percent (68%) of 1987/88.



SUMMARY

Within the selected population of students enroled in programs which were twenty (20) weeks and over in duration, the majority of the students were English speaking. The gender distribution of the selected population changed substantially over the four (4) year period examined. The percentage of female students increased from forty percent (40%) in 1985/86 to forty six percent (46%) in 1988/89.

The average age of the selected student population also increased over the four (4) year period. In 1985/86 the average age was twenty two (22) years. In 1988/89 the average age was twenty three (23) years.

The percentage distribution of the distance that students are willing to travel for training at NBCCs changed as a result of the College reorientation in 1987/88. Students became more willing to commute and less willing to relocate.

A significant change was recognized in sponsor type during this period. The number of students who were sponsored by CEIC decreased by twenty one percent (21%) over four (4) years.

Sixty four percent (64%) of students enroled in programs twenty (20) weeks and over, in 1988/89, were successful. This percentage was down from 68% in 1987/88.

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